

WASHINGTON – Congresswoman Melissa Bean (IL-08) joined House colleagues today to pass a new incentives program that provides direct rebates to homeowners who invest in energy-efficient improvements to their homes, boosting the green manufacturing and construction sectors, reducing America's energy costs, and helping our environment.

The *Home Star Energy Retrofit Act Of 2010* (H.R. 5019) passed 246-161 today and included two amendments authored by Bean.

“Welcomed signs of economic recovery and competitiveness in the global economy are directly related to the opportunities emerging as businesses become cleaner and leaner,” Bean said during a speech in support of the measure on the House floor. “The same philosophy holds true for American households. Investments in better building materials and technologies can pay for themselves in the form of energy savings – and then some. At the same time, Home Star is a jobs measure. It will provide timely and targeted employment to the skilled trades industry, which is still reeling from the housing bust and economic recession.”

Home Star will spur home energy renovation with two types of consumer incentives:

- Silver Star – This provides up-front rebates for specific energy-saving investments, including insulation, duct sealing, windows and doors, air sealing and water heaters at the time of sale. Homeowners receive up to \$1,500 per improvement, with a rebate of up to \$3,000 or 50 percent of the total project cost.
- Gold Star – This rewards homeowners who conduct a comprehensive energy audit and implement measures to reduce energy use, backed by a quality assurance program. Consumers receive \$3,000 for a demonstrated savings of 20 percent, plus an additional \$1,000 for each additional 5 percent energy savings up to \$8,000 – capped at 50 percent of the project cost.

To ensure quality installations, the bill requires that contractors be certified. Independent quality assurance programs, managed by the states, will conduct field audits after work is completed to ensure proper installation so that consumers are guaranteed the full energy savings from their upgrades. Contractors and vendors will only be allowed to offer customers the Home Star rebate if they are first certified by these programs.

The bipartisan legislation enjoys broad support from business, labor, environmental and consumer groups – including the National Association of Manufacturers, U.S. Chamber of Commerce, National Association of Home Builders, Owens Corning, Home Depot, Laborers' International Union of North America, Natural Resources Defense Council, and the Home Star Coalition with over 1000 business and organization members nationwide.

Two amendments authored by Congresswoman Bean were incorporated into the final bill via the manager's amendment.

The first amendment directs states to work with community colleges on implementation of Home Star.

"These community colleges are excellent resources for worker education, training, and certification, and they collaborate with area employers to provide dynamic and affordable educational resources to meet workforce needs," Bean said.

The second amendment expands the rebate eligibility to include replacement storm windows and doors, which is of particular interest to owners of historic homes who wish to improve their energy efficiency while maintaining the historic integrity of their home.